

Summary

The Solano Transportation Authority (STA), Solano County, and the City of Vallejo, in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Department), propose to modify the existing Interstate 80 (I-80)/Redwood Parkway interchange to a tight diamond configuration, realign Fairgrounds Drive to a tee intersection north of the I-80 westbound ramps, widen Fairgrounds Drive between Redwood Street and State Route 37 (SR 37), widen the westbound exit ramp from SR 37 to Fairgrounds Drive, and improve the intersections at the SR 37/Fairgrounds Drive Interchange. Current transportation issues in this area include poor circulation during peak commute periods, long delays at intersections, short acceleration and deceleration areas, and limited sight distance. In addition, the existing capacity of the roadways in this area would not accommodate the projected future traffic volumes. **Figure 1-1** depicts the project location and **Figures 1-2a** through **1-2c** depicts the proposed Build Alternative improvements.

JOINT CEQA/NEPA DOCUMENT

The project is subject to Federal and State environmental review requirements because the STA proposes the use of federal funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and requires a FHWA approval action. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). STA is the project proponent and the lead agency under CEQA. FHWA's responsibility for environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable Federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried out by the Department under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to Section 6005 of SAFETEA-LU codified at 23 U.S.C. 327(a)(2)(A). Effective July 1, 2007, FHWA has assigned, and the Department has assumed, all the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary's responsibilities under NEPA. The assignment applies to all projects on the State Highway System (SHS) and all Local Assistance Projects off the SHS within the State of California, with the exception of the responsibilities concerning certain categorical exclusions, which were assigned to the Department under the June 7, 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), projects excluded by definition and specific project exclusions.

Some impacts determined to be significant under CEQA may not lead to a determination of significance under NEPA. Because NEPA is concerned with the significance of the project as a whole, it is quite often the case that a "lower level" document is prepared for NEPA. One of the most commonly seen joint document types is an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA).

Following receipt of comments from the public and reviewing agencies, a final environmental document will be prepared. STA and the Department may undertake additional environmental and/or engineering studies to address comments. The final environmental document will include responses to comments received on the Draft EIR/EA and will identify the preferred alternative. If the decision is made to approve the Build Alternative, a Notice of Determination will be published for compliance with CEQA, and the Department will decide whether to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for compliance with NEPA. A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the FONSI will be sent to the affected units of Federal, State, and local government, and to the State Clearinghouse in compliance with Executive Order 12372.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT AREA

The proposed improvements are located within an existing urban context, with a mixture of commercial, office, residential, and recreation facility developments. Beginning at the southernmost portion of the project study area, the I-80/Redwood Parkway interchange and Redwood Parkway/Fairgrounds Drive intersection are surrounded by a mixture of commercial and residential development. The area along Fairgrounds Drive, between Valle Vista Avenue and Coach Lane is developed with multi-family homes and medical office buildings, as well as vacant lands. The area between Coach Lane and SR 37 along Fairgrounds Drive is primarily developed with recreational facilities. Six Flags Discovery Kingdom Amusement Park (Six Flags) and associated surface parking areas are located to west of Fairgrounds Drive. Lake Chabot is also on the west side of Fairgrounds Drive. The Solano County Fairgrounds and associated surface parking areas are located to the east, along with a Courtyard Marriot hotel and fast-food restaurants. The area to the north of SR 37, along Fairgrounds Drive, is comprised of single-family homes, a gas station, and Best Western Inn hotel.

Rindler Creek enters the project study area at the intersection of Coach Lane and Fairgrounds Drive, from under I-80 and then follows the outer boundary of the County Fairgrounds property. The creek flows northwest along Fairgrounds Drive before crossing beneath the road via a series of culverts. The creek forms some backwater channels between the road embankment and the embankment for the Six Flags Amusement Park, and then flows into Lake Chabot.

Related Projects

The revitalization of the 149-acre Solano County Fairgrounds property, located on the east side of Fairgrounds Drive, between Coach Lane and SR 37 is planned for future redevelopment. Future land uses include features such as a public entertainment zone and the fair of the future zone. The public entertainment zone would provide an active gathering place that would be home to a waterside pedestrian trail, restaurants, public art, main street shops, terraced seating, and water-related activities. The fair zone continues the 60-year tradition of the annual Solano County Fair and would house a world class

exhibition hall, organic demonstration farm, children's discovery island, and flexible sports fields and other multi-use facilities.

The analyses of the potential effects of the proposed Build Alternative reflect the local land use and road improvements planned to be in place by 2035.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Current transportation issues within the project corridor include poor circulation during peak commute periods, long delays at intersections, short acceleration and deceleration areas, and limited sight distance. In addition, the existing capacity of the roadways in this area will not accommodate projected future traffic volumes planned for in the project vicinity.

The purpose of the project is to address these issues by:

- Relieving existing congestion and improving traffic flow on the local roadway network for approved redevelopment and planned land uses in the area;
- Improving the existing interchanges and intersection operations; and
- Improving the safety of the local roadway network by reducing congestion.

PROPOSED ACTION

The types of interchange improvements that would be possible at the existing Fairgrounds Drive/SR 37 and the Redwood Parkway/I-80 interchange are limited because these areas are physically constrained by the existing residential and commercial development. With the exception of the Build Alternative, other interchange configurations would require the reconstruction of the existing overcrossing structures and have severe right-of-way impacts combined with extremely high construction costs. Similarly, along the Fairgrounds Drive right-of-way, no other alignment alternatives were possible because of the steep grades and developed land uses and/or water features on either side of the roadway.

Because of these constraints, no other design alternatives were carried forward beyond initial design screenings. The alternatives evaluated in this environmental document include the Build Alternative and the No-Build (No Action) Alternative.

Build Alternative

Figures 1-2a through **1-2c** illustrate the improvements proposed under the Build Alternative, which would include the following major elements:

- Modification of the Redwood Parkway/I-80 Interchange
- Relocation of the Fairgrounds Drive/Redwood Street Intersection

- Moorland Street Cul-de-sacs
- Widening of Fairgrounds Drive
- Modifications to the Fairgrounds Drive/SR 37 interchange
- Signal Modifications

The total length of the project corridor is approximately 1.5 miles, and extends from the Fairgrounds Drive/ SR 37 interchange (postmile 4.0-4.9) to the Redwood Parkway/Interstate 80 (I-80) interchange (postmile 10.6-11.2).

No-Build (No Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative is being evaluated in accordance with NEPA and CEQA requirements, and serves as the baseline comparison to the Build Alternative. Under the No-Build Alternative, Fairgrounds Drive would maintain its existing configuration. No realignment of the Fairgrounds Drive/Redwood Street intersection would occur. There would be no improvements to the SR 37/Fairgrounds Drive or I-80/Redwood Parkway/Admiral Callaghan Lane interchanges.

Traffic volumes within the project corridor would increase under the No-Build Alternative. As there are no improvements proposed to the existing local roadway network, the No-Build Alternative would not achieve the project purpose of increasing the local roadway network capacity to accommodate existing and approved redevelopment and growth in the area. In addition, the increased traffic volumes without capacity improvements would worsen the congestion and slow traffic flow on the local roadway network. Without the realignment of the Fairgrounds Drive/Redwood Street intersection, the No-Build Alternative would not improve the current safety issues related to limited sight distance in this area. In addition, without modifying the I-80 eastbound ramps to a tight diamond configuration, short acceleration and deceleration lanes would remain, resulting in nonstandard merge and diverge distances.

Project Impacts

Table S-1 summarizes the adverse effects of the Build Alternative in comparison with the No-Build Alternative. The proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to reduce the effects of the Build Alternative are also presented. For a complete description of potential adverse effects and recommended measures, please refer to the specific sections within **Chapter 2.0, Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**.

Table S-1 Project Impacts

Environmental Topic	No Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Land Use			
Division of an established community	None expected	None expected	None
Compatibility with land use plans	Low	High consistency	None
Compatibility with habitat conservation plan	Not applicable	Not applicable	None
Growth			
No Effect			
Farmlands/Timberlands			
No Effect			
Community Impacts			
Displacement of existing housing	None	19 residential parcels potentially affected	Caltrans Relocation Assistance Program
Displacement of significant number of people	None expected	Unknown	Caltrans Relocation Assistance Program
Disproportionately affect environmental justice communities	No	No	None
Utilities/Emergency Services			
No Effect			
Traffic and Transportation			
Conflict with applicable plans, ordinances, policies, or programs	None	None	None
Increase congestion	Yes	Will reduce congestion	None
Increase hazards as a result of a design feature	None	None	None

Environmental Topic	No Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Visual Resources			
Adverse effect on scenic views/damage scenic resources	Same as Build Alternative	No scenic resources in project area	None
Degradation of existing visual character or quality	None expected	Potential visual quality lost	Roadway design would adhere to City of Vallejo Standard Specifications All landscaping removed by project would be replaced
Create a new source of light or glare	None expected	Temporary due to construction	Caltrans light and glare screening measures
Cultural Resources			
Create an adverse change in the significance of a historical resource	None expected	No historical resources in project vicinity	None
Create an adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource	None expected	No archaeological resources in project vicinity.	An Archaeological Monitoring and Discovery Plan has been prepared that specifies the appropriate construction monitoring locations and protocols recommended for an area near the known redeposit of archaeological materials outside of the project's area of potential effect (APE).
Disturbance to human remains	None expected	None expected	If human remains discovered, activity will stop (State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5). If the remains are thought to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission will be contacted (Public Resources Code Section 5097.98).
Hydrology and Floodplain			
Within a 100-year floodplain	Same as Build Alternative	Small portion of Fairgrounds Drive, north of Coach Lane	None

Environmental Topic	No Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Expose people/structures to a significant risk of loss	Unknown	None expected	None
Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff			
Result in substantial drainage pattern alteration	None	None expected	None
Violation of water quality standards	None	Temporarily during construction	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
Change to groundwater supply or groundwater recharge	None	None	None
Substantially degrade water quality	None	Possible operation impacts	Design Pollution Prevention and Treatment Best Management BMPs.
Geology			
Expected Likelihood of seismic related issues, including ground shaking and liquefaction	Same as Build Alternative	High potential for ground shaking, liquefaction potential varies	Caltrans seismic design standards
Expose people or structures to potential adverse effects	None expected	Worker safety	Occupational Safety and Health Act Section 5(a)(1)
Paleontology			
Unearth previously unidentified paleontological resources (i.e., fossil remains and sites)	None expected	Potential due to excavation and construction activities	Preparation and implementation of a Department-approved paleontological monitoring and mitigation program. See Mitigation Measure PAL-1
Hazardous Materials			
Create a hazard to the environment	None expected	Potential due to excavation and construction activities	Additional subsurface sampling, Soil Management Plan, and Caltrans Variance Follow regulations requiring abatement of asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint.

Environmental Topic	No Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Create a hazard to the public	None expected	None expected	Additional subsurface sampling, Soil Management Plan, and Caltrans Variance Follow regulations requiring abatement of asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint.
Location on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites	Same as Build Alternative	Varies throughout project area, sites on several lists	Additional subsurface sampling, Soil Management Plan, and Caltrans Variance Follow regulations requiring abatement of asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint.
Noise			
Exposure of the public to excessive noise levels, including groundborne noise levels	None	Some temporary noise effects, no permanent ambient noise increase with mitigation	Noise abatement measures, sound walls
A substantial increase in permanent noise levels	None expected	Potential permanent noise level increases ranging from 0 to 6 dBA (varies throughout project area)	Potential noise abatement measures
A substantial increase in temporary noise levels	None	Due to construction activities	Restricted construction hours, equipment mufflers, equipment placed away from sensitive receptors, "quiet" air compressors, no unnecessary idling, equipment must conform to Standard Specifications
Energy			
No Effect			

Environmental Topic	No Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Biological Resources			
Effects to sensitive or special status species	None	Western pond turtle, potential effect to bird habitat	Limit construction zone, limit artificial lighting, dispose of food-related trash, no firearms on site, no pets on site, conduct nesting bird surveys prior to construction and butterfly survey, biological monitor present during Rindler Creek relocation
Effects to habitat or sensitive natural communities	None	Wetlands/riparian woodlands effected due to realignment of Rindler Creek	Compensatory mitigation for jurisdictional water features. See Mitigation Measure BIO-1.
Conflict with local policies/plans	None	None	None

COORDINATION WITH PUBLIC AND OTHER AGENCIES

Notice of Preparation and Scoping

“Scoping” is the process of determining the scope, focus, and content of an environmental document. The scoping process allows agencies and other interested parties to provide input on the proposed project, range of alternatives, topics being evaluated, environmental effects, methods of assessment, and mitigation measures being considered.

Scoping for this project included the use of several channels of communication, including the Notice of Preparation (NOP), mailers, internet, and newspaper ads. In addition, a public open house scoping meeting was held on January 26, 2011 to inform the public and agencies of the project and scoping process. The NOP was issued to the State Clearinghouse on January 11, 2011. A mailer, which provided information on the project and details of the scoping meeting, was distributed to approximately 2,000 stakeholders in the project vicinity. Stakeholders include property owners within 500 feet of the project, elected officials and public agencies, special interest organizations, and neighborhood groups. The list of stakeholders was developed with the aid of the City of Vallejo Planning Department, the Solano 360 project stakeholder list, and local parcel data. This information was also posted on January 11, 2011 to the STA website: www.sta.ca.gov. The project information on the website was available both in English and Spanish and provided project location maps.

An e-mail address (fairgroundsdrieproject@gmail.com) was created as an additional method for the public to comment on the Build Alternative.

A display advertisement announcing the scoping period and the public open house scoping meeting ran in the Vallejo Times-Herald and Cronicas (the local Spanish-language newspaper) on Tuesday, January 11, 2011.

There were eight written comments submitted at the January 26 scoping meeting. Two comment sheets were mailed to STA and six e-mails were received via fairgroundsdrieproject@gmail.com. One comment letter was received from the California Department of Fish and Game, one letter was received from the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, and one comment letter was received from the California Transportation Commission. Key issues raised during the scoping period are addressed in **Chapter 2.0, Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**, of this environmental document.

A public meeting was held on January 18, 2012 to provide information and answer questions about the Build Alternative. Invitation letters were sent to property owners whose residence or business may potentially be directly impact by the project. Thirteen property owners and residents signed in at the meeting and one written comment was received.

Necessary Permits and Approvals

Table S-2 identifies the permits/approvals that would be required for project construction.

Table S-2 Permits and Approvals

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Permit – Nationwide	Issued during the Final Design Phase
United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Concurrence with “no effect” determination	Issued during the Final Design Phase
California Department of Fish and Game	1602 Agreement	Issued during the Final Design Phase
California Water Resources Board	NPDES Permit	Issued during the Final Design Phase
Regional Water Quality Control Board	Section 401 Certification	Issued during the Final Design Phase

Temporary construction easements may be required from the City of Valley and Solano County to accommodate work outside State-owned right-of-way.

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